

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 22, 2005**

## **Tail docking agreement reached**

State groups have come to a consensus about how to handle the tail docking issue at the Wyoming State Fair.

The four main groups that have been working to resolve this issue are the Wyoming Wool Growers Association, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming State Fair, and the newly formed Wyoming Club Lamb Association.

After hours of deliberation at the State Fair Advisory Board meeting, held Monday in Laramie, the board was able to agree on a policy that seemed to appease all in attendance.

The new policy states: "Every sheep that shows at the Wyoming State Fair must be accompanied by a certificate signed by a veterinarian which has a doctor/client relationship with the owner of the animal and which attests to the fact that the animal has a minimum three (3) full coccygeal vertebrae."

In the future, all exhibitors that arrive at the Wyoming State Fair with the proper documentation will be allowed to show their sheep. It is hoped that this new policy will resolve any disputes that have occurred in the past. A system of checks and balances is also in place with this new policy. If a question arises, the animal in question will be x-rayed by the local veterinarian.

Tail docking originally began centuries ago as a health and cleanliness issue. Extreme docking, on the other hand, has evolved in the shows rings only for the purpose of aesthetic value. While show ring judges have favored this trend, the U.S. Animal Health Association, the American Veterinary Medical Association, the American Association of Small Ruminant Practitioners, the American Sheep Industry Association and the American Farm Bureau Association have all developed resolutions urging that sheep be long docked for the welfare of the animals.

Scientific studies show that the incidence of rectal prolapse is much lower if a dock is a long dock. This incidence increases dramatically if the tail has a short dock. The Wyoming State Fair is very concerned with the welfare of the animals as well as using accepted animal husbandry practices.

"Our position is that we shouldn't be risking the health of these animals for the purpose of show ring mystique," John Etchepare, Director of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, said.

Questions may be directed to the Wyoming Department of Agriculture.

**###**